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ANSWER

T O

The Rev. Mr. *Charles Bulkley's*

Pleas for Mixt Communion.

As published in

TWO DISCOURSES ON *John iii. 5.*

Under the Title of

CATHOLIC COMMUNION, &c.

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T O

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Pleas for Mixt Communion.

TH A T the sentiment about mixt communion contained in the discourses herein considered, so very contrary to the universal sense and judgment of the whole christian world, for about seventeen centuries, should at all prevail in our day, would be thought surprising by many persons; did not experience convince us, that there is scarce an opinion, how wild soever and inconsistent with the reason of things, that if started by a man otherwise esteemed for good sense and learning, but it will find both admirers and advocates: Of this the sermons under consideration as well as a late pretended defence are proofs; being both of them apparently derived, from the mistaken sentiment of the late Rev. and much celebrated Dr. James Foster; who in his first vol. of *discourses on natural religion and social virtue*, published a sermon under the title of *catholic communion*. In which his great warmth against bigotry and party zeal, hurried him so far into the contrary extreme, that in order to promote what he terms an universal brotherly communion of all good christians, he has advanced sentiments which naturally tend to destroy all regard for the christian cause: And whilst he recommends the general union of all christians in partaking together of one of Christ's ordinances; he has made a sacrifice of the other: Whilst he enforces a general regard for the Lord's supper, he represents baptism as *a mere arbitrary appointment*, paragraph xii. *A comparatively useless peculiarity*, par. xiii. *An outward form, and insignificant subtile confounding speculation*, par. i. *What has a direct tendency to create animosities and divisions*, par. xiii. Thus has he led his readers to rank sacred baptism

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the appointment of heaven ; with the wild and wicked inventions of men, without making the least exception, or adding one single word in favour of it ; and without considering the consequences of his fatal opinion : As if the most perfect and holy God, could by *his only begotten and well beloved Son*, appoint a ceremony of such pernicious tendency ; or that a Being of boundless unerring wisdom, could command his church to observe, and his creatures to obey an institution so trifling and unnecessary, that they might either perform, or neglect it as they pleased ; and that it was not the interest, and also the honour of men readily to receive, and to obey all God's institutions without disputing, or seeking out excuses to evade them. But if professed christians are once led to think, that they are not obliged to obey Christ in baptism, nor submit to it in order to become members of his church, and partakers in the privileges thereof : they may naturally, and as reasonably conclude, that they cannot be under any obligation to obey him in partaking of the Lord's supper. And that if *baptism* which is *from heaven*, and one of the positive institutions of the Son of God be not binding on those who believe in him, then consequently neither can his other positive institution lay the least obligation on them to observe it ; nor indeed, not any of the doctrines and precepts of the gospel, considered as the doctrines and precepts of Christ Jesus, can be at all binding upon any man ; and therefore, upon this principle, there is not any the least regard to be paid unto christianity as the religion of Christ Jesus our Lord ; nor on any other consideration, but *only* as it agrees with, or is a part of natural religion : Thus the whole of christianity must of course be given up, and infidelity would certainly prevail and triumph in its stead. A remarkable passage therefore of the doctor's own was in the following manner properly enough applied to him, in answer to the xviith paragraph of his sermon.

“ We have indeed the highest reason, and are by gratitude obliged, to bless and praise God, who has mercifully delivered us from the incredible ignorance, superstition, and tyranny of the apostate church of Rome, and has hitherto *disappointed her repeated attempts to bring us again under her insupportable yoke of bondage* ; but let us all carefully guard against the contrary extreme ; let us not grow indifferent to, nor sacrifice my part of real christianity in complaisance to others, either by giving up, or dispensing with the institution of baptism, in condescension to their prejudices /

prejudices against the truth ; for such a compliance must most naturally tend, not only to banish true christianity from among us, but, in the end, to extinguish all regard to the christian name.' For baptism, as doctor F. asserts, is a duty entirely christian, &c. and, if the authority of Christ is not to be regarded and maintained in that particular, why should it be so in any other, depending on the same authority ? Infidelity therefore must necessarily rise, prevail, and be established, as our regard for his authority declines, and manifests itself by our giving up, or dispensing with his institutions. This indifference to Christ's institutions, and the boundless superstition which popery has introduced, are such extremes of error, as very naturally bring to my mind what the doctor says in his introduction, vol. i. p. 12. ' But mankind, confused in thought and ' blinded by their passions, are too apt to overlook the ' middle path, where truth, and right, and safety lie, and ' center in one, or other of these dangerous excesses. ' When they have a notion of any thing as highly absurd ' and injurious, they seem bewildered, and know not ' where to stop ; and the force of their prejudices pushes ' them on to an equal extreme. In order to keep, at the ' utmost possible distance from error, they fly likewise from ' truth.'

Dr. F——'s whole sermon on this subject stiled *catholic communion* was carefully examined, and so fully answered paragraph by paragraph ; that when the examiner had gone through all his arguments, and the only objection which the doctor thought fit to mention, he could freely add, p. 57. ' Thus it most clearly appears, that this sermon in every paragraph, and almost every sentiment contained in it, does, in its just consequences, betray the truths and institutions, of the gospel, does naturally tend to advance and establish infidelity upon the ruin of the christian cause. But I am persuaded, these most fatal evils are the farthest from the doctor's sincere and most upright intentions, of any thing we can possibly conceive ; For I am well assured he abhors from his very soul all such consequences, which so naturally result, and must necessarily arise from what he has advanced ; whereby so great encouragement is given to infidelity, and so much injury is done, or like to ensue from thence to the christian cause. For if the doctor himself is at all to be regarded, then all those who bear the christian name and character, are under indispensable obligations, not only to conform, and become

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obedient unto ; but also to esteem and look upon the positive institutions of God, as equally sacred and inviolable with those, which are moral and unchangeable.' For these are his own words.

' The positive duties of our holy religion are equally sacred, and demand from us, if we are from conviction christians, and in decency of character, if we are only nominal, nay, if we are hypocritical, and merely mercenary christians, the same outward regard and strict observation, as those which are moral and unchangeable. Though they are not of the same importance and intrinsic dignity, they are, and must be equally inviolable, because there is but one enacting authority with respect to both the laws of nature and revelation ; and though the former may be received, as fit rules of conduct, they can never be obeyed as laws of government, but upon the very same foundation and ground of authority. For nature cannot be superior to God, because it is the constitution and creature of God ; it can therefore have no pretence to controul his will supernaturally revealed ; for in both cases the wisdom is the same, and the right of governing the same. A christian therefore, to whom alone I am now addressing my discourse, must yield exact obedience to the positive institutions of the christian doctrine on the self-same principle, on which he thinks it is his duty to conform from motives of religion, or acknowledgment and suitable veneration of the supreme Deity, to the eternal and universal rules of virtue and morality.

' When therefore any of us acknowledging the authority of Christ, and the divinity and truth of his religion, live in the omission of any positive duty, which he in the name of God, and as invested with his supreme authority, has enjoined upon us, we act in such a manner as is not only absolutely inconsistent with the character we assume, and should think it our honour to bear, of being his disciples, but in a way that is a contradiction to itself, and to all the natural principles of reason. For there is no one clearer and more certain principle of everlasting and unalterable right, within the whole extent and scope of moral duty than this, that the omnipotent Creator and sovereign Ruler, whose dominion is unlimited, and who is absolute in wisdom, and in all moral excellence, should be revered, honoured, and obeyed in all his laws, in all the discoveries and declarations of his will,

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whether by the voice of nature, or by extraordinary methods of revelation. And in no one point can there be the least just ground to object, without supposing that he is a capricious, arbitrary, tyrannical being, who is not in the abstract propriety and truth of things fit to be obeyed, nor consequently, without entirely dissolving, together with every instituted tie, the religion of nature and reason itself.

These clear truths, with many arguments of the same kind often urged in my examination, against the promiscuous communion Mr. B. contends for, he has never considered in the sermons before us, notwithstanding he pretends to answer objections; and has made that the subject of his last discourse: But for what reason he so carefully avoided taking notice of them, I shall leave the reader to judge: With only just observing, that this subject has hitherto been treated, much in the same manner that our pædo-baptist brethren do their controversy with us; they seem to think that their opponents are obliged to answer every the most trifling objection, which their prejudices can suggest, or their capacity invent, in order to avoid or excuse themselves from obeying a plain institution of Christ; whilst at the same time, they appear quite unconcerned about taking any notice, much less, answering the arguments urged against them: So likewise, though certain arguments against mixt communion were presented to Dr. F. several years before he published his sermon under the title of catholic communion, yet he took no notice of them; and though the examination of that discourse was addressed to the doctor in the closest manner, yet he never attempted a vindication; and he as carefully avoided to engage in any conversation about the answer, though it hung with weight upon his mind, even in the decline of his reasoning powers, and bodily strength. A forward gentleman indeed, printed a pretended defence of the doctor's sermon without his approbation, but it was what he greatly disliked when published; as I was assured, by a gentleman very intimate with Dr. F. This piece, was soon answered, in such a manner, as the spirit and stile of it justly demanded: Shewing also by a number of quotations from the examination, that the things therein alledged, were fully answered, even before the gentleman had penned them; so that *Philocatholicus* has since been more modest, and less forward to discourse on the subject, as I have been told. And this novel controversy, would I presume have subsided; if the

the sermons under consideration had not revived it again, for ends best known unto the author. The chief which he suggests to his readers are, *the honour and prosperity of the society* they were preached to, *in cultivating acquaintance and friendship with such as they shall declare themselves willing to receive into their communion, and not for the sake of opposition*, p. 4. 5. 36. 60. How far these ends would be answered, should *the society* conform to his desires, time alone can discover: But if we may judge by the fate of other churches where the experiment hath been tried, it is very unlikely, that either *honour* or *prosperity* can accrue to that *society*, should they ever sacrifice, or give up an institution of the gospel, for the sake of cultivating acquaintance and friendship with such as refuse obedience to Christ's express command. However, I cannot help remarking again, that Mr. B. has not, as might justly have been expected, duly considered the arguments hinted at above, nor a great many more contained in the examination of Dr. Foster's sermon on the same subject. And tho' he has made choice of John iii. 5. for his text, yet he never considers the following exposition which had been given of it in a letter to a learned divine; printed about ten years ago, and presented to Mr. B. But in order to serve his purposes about mixt communion, he contents himself with giving his readers an explication quite inconsistent with the scope of the words, and directly contrary to the universal sense of the christian church, as will hereafter be shewn.

The exposition above hinted at, runs thus. "I look upon John iii. 5. to be a passage of scripture very full to my purpose, and shall therefore lay before you, first, what I understand by the terms therein contained; and then my reasons, why I cannot account those christian members of the true visible church of Christ, who have never been baptized with water. In verse 3. our Lord says in general, *except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God*; the meaning of which, *Nicodemus* seemed wholly at a loss how to understand; and therefore our Lord in verse 5. particularly explains, what it was that he intended by being *born again, and seeing the kingdom of God*, namely, a being *born of water and of the spirit, and entering into the kingdom of God*. By being *born of water*, I understand a being baptized with water, the coming out of which may be the allusion to our first birth: And this was a thing so well known by the multitudes of disciples, who were baptized by Christ, and his forerunner John, that it needed no explanation,

planation, or enlargement. And you very well know, that both ancient and modern christian writers sometimes express the baptism of water, as well as the change wrought in the believer, by regeneration. It is in the constitutions, and by Justin Martyr called the laver of regeneration; and in scripture, the washing of regeneration, Titus iii. 5.

By being *born of the spirit*, I understand that moral change made by the ordinary influences of the spirit of God, thro' which every believer ought to pass, before he enters into the visible church of Christ; and which is expressed by his professing repentance for sins that are past, and a holy resolution to walk in newness of life for the future; no longer to *live unto himself*, according to the *sinful lusts and desires of the flesh, and of the mind*, but unto Christ Jesus, walking even as he walked, 2 Cor. v. 16. Eph. ii. 3. Agreeable to this, the baptism of John is stiled *the baptism of repentance, for the remission of sins*; and them, therefore, who came to be baptized of him, he exhorted to *bring forth fruits meet for repentance*, Matt. iii. 1. 9. 10. Mark i. 4. Luke iii 3. 8. And as this is the chief and principal part of the new birth, so our Lord in the sixth and eighth verses more particularly describes the nature and spirituality of it, by an apt similitude.

By entering into the kingdom of God, I understand a being received into the visible church of Christ, who is our king and lawgiver, by the appointment of God, Isa. ix. 6. 7. *The government shall be upon his shoulder*; and he says himself, Matt. xxviii. 18. *All power is given unto me, in heaven and in earth*. For to suppose that by the kingdom of God is meant the kingdom of glory, or everlasting life, would be excluding every unbaptized person from thence. But as I am very far from doing this, so I am persuaded, that our Lord never intended the members of his church should entertain any such uncharitable thought of others: And therefore, I believe, that cannot be the meaning of this phrase, which in many places of scripture must be understood of the church of Christ, as Matt. xviii. 4. and xix. 24. and xxi. 31. and xxiii. 13. Mark xii. 34. Luke ix. 62. and xvi. 16. Coloss. i. 3. 1 Thess. ii. 12, &c.

Nor can our Lord's assertion, ver. 3. and his own explanation of it, ver. 5. *Except a man be born again of water, and of the spirit*, be understood only in some mystical sense; because such an explanation would have left Nicodemus full as ignorant, and as much in the dark how to understand him, as he was before: But on the contrary, they
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are spoken of in ver. 5. as two things really distinct, and yet closely accompanying each other in every one, who enters into the visible church of Christ. Nor can the words be understood of the supernatural gifts of the Holy Ghost; *for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified*, John vii. 39. And therefore it is not at all likely, that our Lord would discourse to Nicodemus about a thing, of which he could not possibly have any knowledge or understanding, and which was not in his power to obtain. But our Lord spoke and testified to him, *that which was both known and seen*, ver. 11. which is literally true of the moral change, and the administration of holy baptism; and therefore he said unto him, ver. 7. *Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again*. As much as if he had said, it is not coming to me, or conversing with me *by night*, Nicodemus, nor yet believing my miracles, and confessing that I am *a teacher come from God*, which well make you a member of my church. In order for that, you must be baptized, and undergo a moral change in the spirit and temper of your mind. After this, he upbraids him for his dulness and ignorance, ver. 10. and ver. 11. he blames him for not *receiving his witness*, and then adds, ver. 12. *If I have told you of earthly things, and ye believe not*, that is, if you do not believe and obey me in those things, which relate only to the constitution of my church here upon the earth, and without which neither you *Nicodemus*, nor any man else, can enter into, or become a member thereof; how can I expect that you will, *believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?* Things relating to my own incarnation, that supernatural change, which I myself have passed thro', John i. 14. 1 Cor. xv. 47. or of that change, which will take place upon my true disciples, in the resurrection from the dead, when they shall be made partakers in the glories of another, future, and better kingdom with the church triumphant; or if I should deliver to you, without such easy comparisons, as the blowing of the wind, and the birth of a man, the more sublime parts of my heavenly doctrine. And to shew the necessity and advantage of an honest mind to prepare men for the reception of the truth, he says. *But he that doth the truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God*, ver. 21."

That I am not like Mr. B—, wholly singular in my judgment concerning the sense of John iii. 3, 5. But that some gentlemen of the greatest learning and abilities agree therein

therein with me, is plain from the following passages ; tho' many more might be produced from other writers, if there was occasion. And, first, the learned Dr. Whitby, in his annotations says ; ' That to *see the kingdom of God* here, ' and to *enter into it*, ver. 5. is the same thing, and both ' these phrases signify to be a real member of that king- ' dom, and to enjoy the blessings belonging to them who ' are so ; That Christ seems to speak this not pri- ' marily of that heavenly kingdom, into which the blessed ' shall enter at the day of judgment, but of that spiritual ' kingdom which was to be erected by the Messiah ; and ' into which men entered by baptism ; whence it must fol- ' low, that no man is indeed a member of Christ's king- ' dom, who is not truly regenerate. That this ' seems to be directed against the false and pernicious con- ' ceptions of the *Jewish* doctors, the scribes and pharisees, ' who thought they had a title to the kingdom of God, ' and the blessings of it, as being the seed of Abraham ac- ' cording to the flesh' And on the fifth verse, ' That ' our Lord here speaks of baptismal regeneration, the whole ' christian church from the beginning hath always taught, ' and that with very good reason ; for, first, tho' water is ' sometimes put to signify, or represent the purifying o- ' perations of the holy spirit, yet to be born of water is a ' phrase never used in scripture, for being born of the spirit ; ' but very properly it is used of that baptism, which is the ' laver of regeneration, Tit. iii. 5. and was by all ' the ancients stiled, *παιγγενεσια*, or regeneration. Se- ' condly, To be baptized with water and the Holy ' Ghost, most likely signifies to be baptized with the Holy ' Ghost, and with the symbol of water.* Thirdly, the ' question betwixt Christ and *Nicodemus* was about that ' which was requisite to fit a man to enter into the king- ' dom, that is, the church of God, and make him par- ' taker of the blessings of the gospel. Now it is certain ' that baptism by water is, by our Lord, declared to be ' the ordinary means of entering into his kingdom, for he ' saith, Mark xvi. 16. *He that believeth, and is baptized,* ' *shall be saved* ; Christ, therefore, here declares it ' to be a rite necessary for the entrance of adult persons in- ' to his kingdom, and it seems highly reasonable to esteem ' so of it ; for what salvation can be expected by them, ' who, after he hath told them they must be baptized ' with water, that they may enter into his kingdom, do ' by refusing that sacrament too plainly shew that they

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• refuse that way of entering into his kingdom, and be-
 • coming his disciples, which he had appointed for that
 • end.’

Dr. Benson also, in his dialogues, intitled, *The reasonableness of the christian religion*, has, in answer to an infidel writer, paraphrased this scripture as follows, p. 247.
 • Our Saviour’s conversation with *Nicodemus* is the most
 • just and proper, provided we attend to his character, and
 • to all the circumstances. He was a Pharisee, and laboured
 • under the common prejudices of the *Jews*, and as he was
 • a ruler among them, and of a timorous temper, he came
 • to Jesus by night; however he owned his miracles, and
 • thence inferred his divine mission, most probably taking
 • him for the Messiah: Jesus let him know that coming
 • to him by night was not sufficient, neither had he as a
 • Jew, any right to be a member of the Messiah’s king-
 • dom, but he must, like other proselytes (in the Jewish
 • phrase,) be born again, or publickly take upon him the
 • profession of the christian religion, by baptism; or else
 • he could not see the kingdom of God, could not become
 • a member of Christ’s church, or kingdom. *And a little*
 • *lower* Jesus explained himself, and confirm’d what he had
 • said, assuring him that unless a man (even a Jew) were
 • regularly initiated into his church, or born of water and
 • of the spirit, he could not see (or enter into) the kingdom
 • of God. And from the history of the *Acts* of the apos-
 • tles, and their epistles, we accordingly find, that that was
 • the way, in which Jews, as well as other persons, were
 • initiated into the christian church, being first baptized with
 • water, and then with the Holy Ghost. See, besides many
 • other places *Acts* ii. 38. and viii. 12. and xix. 1. &c. Our
 • Saviour goes on to say, ver. 6. Being born of the flesh,
 • being a Jew by birth, did not initiate him in the christian
 • church; neither would it have done so, if it had been
 • ever so often repeated. But being born of water and of
 • the spirit, would initiate him into the spiritual dispensa-
 • tion. *Nicodemus*, deeply tinctured with the Jewish pre-
 • judices, was very much astonished at Jesus’s talk. Our
 • Saviour observed it, and said unto him, *Marvel not that*
 • *I said unto thee, ye must be born again.*’

And the learned Dr. Gale, in his excellent sermons upon baptism, vol. ii. has clearly asserted, and largely proved the absolute necessity of water baptism, in order to christian church-membership and communion, from this, and many other scriptures: And has therein also fully answer’d most

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of the pleas made use of by Mr. B—; tho' for reasons best known to himself, he has taken no more notice of what is therein urged with the greatest perspicuity and force of reason, nor of other pieces upon the same subject, than if he had never seen or heard any thing of those arguments, or that any thing of that nature had ever been published. The mean opinion which our author may entertain of my writings on this subject, of which I am told he has spoken with great contempt, may perhaps be the reason why he has taken no notice of them; yet surely he could have no such excuse for neglecting the works of so learned and excellent a writer as Dr. Gale. The not examining his arguments therefore, must surely be imputed either to forgetfulness, or to unaccountable carelessness about a point of the utmost importance as I conceive: But if he had ever read the doctor, he has then given us a convincing proof of his modesty, ingenuity and good sense; by entirely concealing it from the public, rather than appear openly to differ from so great a man, for the sake of introducing the following passage, p. 18. 'If these words should appear to contain no rule or injunction of the kind now mentioned, I believe the warmest advocates for such a restriction, with respect to the right of attending upon the Lord's supper, will find it extremely difficult to fix upon any other passage, in which they can so much as suppose the least appearance of any such rule or injunction.' But if Mr. B. never did read what Dr. Gale has said on this subject, he must, as I just now observed, have been very partial, or very careless in his enquiries, concerning a matter of the utmost importance. And if he ever did read him, and had not quite forgot his arguments, then no excuse can be made for the words just cited; because he must then know, that the doctor no more than others, does not rest the controversy upon the single text under consideration; but on the contrary, that his arguments are more copiously drawn from a great many other scriptures, and that he begins his seventh sermon upon the subject as follows.

'Having in my former discourse, proved that Jesus Christ did certainly institute a water baptism, and that this institution was to continue in force to the end of the world; I come now to shew that, according to the scriptures, none may be accounted members of the christian church, or admitted to the Lord's supper, without being first baptized. Here let it be remember'd, that not our own fancies, not what we have been used to think severe or rigid, but the

scriptures alone are to be the rule by which we are to judge in this matter; and by this rule alone, I think, I am able to demonstrate the proposition laid down, and that baptism is indispensibly necessary to church-membership; for this truth appears very evident from divers weighty considerations.

And here I would in the first place, recommend to your diligent perusal the history of the conversion, and baptism of St. Peter's first converts, related Acts ii. 37. and following verses; in which there are several things deserving on this occasion to be particularly taken notice of. When, upon the apostle's preaching, they believed, and enquired what it was their duty to do as christians; the apostle immediately sums up the whole of their duty in these two words, *repent, and be baptized*; either because that was all, or else included all, and was then likewise understood to do so. But this can no otherwise be, than as baptism must be supposed, to be the initiation, and itself the first duty of all who believe and repent, whereby they undertake, and become obliged to observe the whole christian revelation; as it is said of circumcision, that persons are thereby obliged to keep the whole law of Moses, as taking on themselves the profession of Judaism. And in this view it is, at least, very probable that the apostle here advises them to be baptized; for indeed, what possible advantage could accrue to them, merely from baptism in itself? They believed already; they were pricked in their hearts, and felt the greatest sorrow for their crime, as that phrase imports; and the mere washing their flesh in water could, in itself, add nothing which might recommend them to the mercy and acceptance of God. As therefore the apostle, upon their earnest request and inquiry, exhorts them to be baptized, as one of the chief and necessary parts of their duty on this occasion, it must be understood to be recommended as the rite of initiation into the christian religion; why else should baptism have been mentioned here? It can't be from any intrinsic value in this above other duties; and yet if baptism had not been immediately more necessary to those persons, in the present circumstances, upon the christian scheme, than any other duty, can it be supposed that the apostle would have mentioned repentance and baptism only, and have omitted other things more valuable in their own nature, and according to the present notions of some, (*particularly Mr. B—,*) more fit to be recommended to them, and at least equally necessary to have been observed by them? Would the apostle mention the less needful, and omit

the more weighty and substantial duties of christianity, and that too in his instructions to persons who applied to him in deep distress? Would he trouble such persons in the infancy of their faith, and the fears and uneasinesses they were under? Would he trouble them with what might as well have been deferr'd to any other opportunity, and with such things as some have now learned, I know not whence, to call useless, insignificant, or indifferent, and circumstances not material, and of little or no consequence? The apostle's conduct shews plainly, he had another very different notion of this matter, and assures them, among the necessary things inquired after, and which was their indispensable duty immediately to perform, that they must be baptized every one of them. He does not say, repent and love one another; he does not say, repent and do justice, repent and keep the commandments, repent and obey the Lord Jesus, love God above all, and thy neighbours as thy self; he does not say, repent and observe all the great duties of religion, or repent and receive the Lord's supper; but *repent and be baptized*. What, is baptism then more excellent and to be preferr'd to all other duties? No; but baptism is mentioned, because it is the first duty incumbent on christians to perform upon their faith and repentance; and that whereby they enter into the body or church of Christ, and undertake to live according to his laws, walking in newness of life. In this view only baptism can be so particularly mentioned in this case, and then it must follow, that baptism is not the circumstantial, indifferent thing some persons have ventured to call it; but on the contrary, that it is a very great and necessary duty incumbent on all believers, and required of every one as indispensable to their becoming members of Christ's body.

Farther, it is to be observed in this history of the conversion of these proselytes to christianity, *they who gladly received his word were baptized*, ver. 41. that is, all they; 'tis not said that some, but that in general they, or all they who gladly received his doctrine were baptized. The being baptized is noted as the necessary and immediate consequence of their gladly receiving the christian doctrine. Their being baptized cannot be supposed to be so particularly mentioned, on account of any real value in the bare external performance considered in itself: The same persons, no doubt, believed and repented, and were supposed to love and to fear God and Christ, and to hope in them; to despise the world and its engagements, and set their heart on things
above:

above: To put on humility, brotherly love, with an open teachable disposition of mind, ready to receive the truth: And why then should all these virtues be here passed over in silence, and it be only noted that they were baptized? This can be accounted for no other way, but by saying that baptism included all these, as it was the ceremony whereby they declared themselves to become members of the same sect with the apostles, and followers of the same master, and were incorporated in the same society. And thus, indeed, it is explained in the following part of the same 41st verse, the whole running thus, *Then they who gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added to them about three thousand souls*: Or more agreeable to the and without transposing the words, as it is done in our original, translation; *Then they who gladly received his word were baptized, and there were added in that day about three thousand souls*. This plainly supposes that they were added in the manner before mentioned, viz. by receiving his word, and being baptized; they who received the apostle's word were added, but they who received his word were baptized; they only were added therefore, who were baptized. Nothing can be more plain than this is, and therefore it follows, that according to this pattern, none can be added to the church, but such as both receive the word, and are baptized; but that such as do not believe, and also such as are not baptized, both the one and the other, cannot be added to the church. That *added* in this verse means added to the church, is very plain from the known use of that phrase in the new testament: Thus, Acts v. 14. *Believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both men and women*. By the way it may be observed, that no children, but only men and women are said to be added. Again, ch. xi. 24. *Much people was added to the Lord*. But that this is the sense of the place, appears beyond all possible doubt, from the last verse of the second chapter; in which this way of speaking is compleated, and *added* is there expressly explained by *added to the church* in these words; *And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved*. And now it being first said, that *they who gladly received his word were baptized*; and then immediately after, and of the same persons, that *there were added to the church that day about three thousand souls*; nothing can be more natural than to understand this to mean, that these three thousand were added to the church in the manner before related, the last part of this verse being an historical inference drawn from the fact mentioned, in the former part. Hence therefore,

fore, it must evidently follow, that if persons were added to the church by being baptized, then none can become members of the church without baptism.'

And after several observations upon the words fellowship, breaking of bread, &c. he in page 304. farther adds, ' But to omit several other observations which might be made upon this latter part of the second of the Acts, it will sure be readily allowed from what I have said, that all they who received the apostle's doctrine, and believed in Christ, were instantly baptized by the apostle's command, as the first and immediate duty they were to perform ; and that therefore all believers are equally obliged in the first place to be baptized, the apostle commanding these, as believers, to submit to this ordinance, before they are said to become members of the church. It likewise follows, that the apostle, in his answer to that great question his converts put, about the necessary things to be done by them who believe, making mention only of repentance and baptism, does manifestly make this ordinance of indispensable necessity ; not, indeed, on account of any real intrinsic value, but purely on account of that rank it holds among christian duties, from its use and design for which it is appointed ; and as it is a ceremony of initiation into, and taking up the profession of the christian religion. It also plainly follows, that receiving the christian doctrine is not sufficient to constitute members of the christian church without baptism ; the apostle commanding them, after their faith, to repent and be baptized ; it being so expressly declared that they were baptized, before it is said that they were added to the church ; and it being said immediately after their baptism, that they were added. If it had been said, *that many gladly received his word, and there were added to the church*, &c. this would, no doubt, have been urged to shew, that baptism was not necessary ; but only receiving the word, upon which they are said to be added. But in as much as it expressly said, that *they who received his word were baptized* ; and then immediately it is said, that there were, to wit of these, added about three thousand souls, it must be natural to understand it, that they were added in this manner, and by this ceremony. And if so, then not any internal reception and belief of the gospel ; not any supposed soundness in any particular scheme, or articles of faith, not any agreement in certain principles and notions, is sufficient to constitute persons members of the church without this rite ; which, not indeed from any intrinsic value,

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value, but merely by the high authority of Christ its institutor, is as sacred a duty of the christian religion, and ought to be observed as inviolably in all its parts and uses, as any other thing whatever; for it stands upon the same authority with the whole christian religion, and therefore is of equal force and obligation. And it must be very bold and dangerous for men to pretend, on any account, to dispence with this high obligation; to declare it to be a small or indifferent matter; to neglect and put off their obedience, or, without any authority, to join themselves with such as want this necessary qualification, without which, according to the scripture, none were received as members of Christ's visible church.

But to proceed now to a second argument, for the necessity of baptism to church-membership, which we will take from those words, John iii. 5. *Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* It may be very properly noted here, that the whole christian church have always understood this place of baptism with water, and that it ought to be so understood seems plain, if it be considered, that to be born of water is a phrase never used to signify any thing else but baptism; and therefore there can be no authority for the putting any other sense upon the words, since there is a regeneration with water, or being born again of water, spoken of in scripture, by which baptism has always been meant: And therefore too, we are said to be in baptism *buried to sin*, and raised to newness of life, Rom. vi. 4. and *to put on the new man*, Col. iii. 10. that is, to become new men, or be born again. Farther, as by the like way of speaking, Matt. iii. 11. *baptized with the Holy Ghost, and with fire*, is plainly meant being baptized with the Holy Ghost, descending in the symbol of fire, Acts ii. 2. 3. So in that place, the words *born again of water, and of the spirit*, being in the same construction, must be understood to mean being born again of the spirit, in the symbol of water, or in and by the use of this rite and ceremony, which our Lord instituted to this purpose, viz. to express and signify, and be the symbol of our internal spiritual renovation. It seems therefore, I think, from these considerations, at least very probable, that the words, *Except a man*, &c. whatever else they may refer to, must be understood likewise to speak of water baptism; without which, therefore none can *enter into the kingdom of God*. By the kingdom of God here some understand the kingdom of glory, and others the visible church upon earth, which is in
scripture

Scripture likewise called the kingdom of God. The words understood either way do sufficiently prove the point for which I have produced them, viz. that none can become members of the christian church without baptism.'

And in p. 310. he adds, 'taking our Saviour's words in the other sense, as many do, not of the kingdom of heaven, but only of his kingdom upon earth, or his church, nothing can be more express and full to our purpose than this text. For having already sufficiently shewn you, that by water in this passage must be meant baptism with water; and our Lord so directly declaring, that unless a man be baptized, as well as regenerated in his mind, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God, or the christian church; this is exactly, but only in different words, what I produced it to prove, viz. that except a man be baptized, he cannot be received a member of Christ's church, and admitted to its privileges.'

After this he goes on to shew, that, *The same thing may be very evidently proved; thirdly, from Eph. v. 25, 26. Even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.* But this, with what he has so convincingly argued from Heb. x. 22. 1 Cor. vi. 10, 11. and ch. xii. 13. Eph. vi. 5. Matt. xx. 22. Luke xii. 50. Acts viii. 12. 39, and ch. ix. 6, 10, 18. and ch. xxii. 15. and ch. x. 6, 33, 48. and ch. xiv. 32. the reader may consult at his leisure; and, I hope, will excuse the large transcripts here given, as they are a full answer to many things suggested by Mr. B.

But farther, to the several authorities above cited for the just sense of John iii. 3, 5. I shall only add what Dr. Wall, in his history of infant baptism, and in his defence of the same, says; 'That all the ancient christians (without the exception of one man) do understand that rule of our Saviour, John iii. 5. to mean baptism; and that he believes Calvin to be the first man that ever denied it so to be meant.' This is so full an attestation, to the universal judgment of all antiquity for 14 or 1500 years, in favour of the sense which I have given of John iii. 3, 5. and so directly against our author's pretences, that I could not avoid transcribing it for my readers. And as this is the most clear, easy and natural; the most rational and consistent sense that can be put upon this scripture, so when ever any writers reject the same, and endeavour to force a metaphorical construction upon the words, one that is not

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only obscure, but even unintelligible; it gives too much reason to suspect a design to serve some certain hypothesis which they are very fond of, and determined at all events to promote. Whether this was the case with Mr. B. I shall not pretend to say, but his propositions, as well as the improvement, are stated in terms plainly calculated to draw the attention of his readers, from the clear sense of our Lord in the text: pretending, p. 10. that *if by water must be meant baptism, so by the kingdom of God must be denoted the Lord's supper*. This supposition runs throughout his discourses, but the one is no necessary consequence of the other, nor did any writer, I believe, ever say so but himself. And tho' what he says p. 7. is I presume generally acknowledged, and has often been pleaded for, namely, that the words of our Saviour in the fifth verse, were *intended to express the same sentiment which is contained in those preceding words*: that is, were intended to explain them; yet the inference he would there draw from the seventh verse is really contrary to all the rules of just and fair reasoning: he makes indeed a pompous shew of saying something for it, as if by looking into the chapter, in 'which these words are recorded, we shall find, that they 'are intended to express exactly the same sentiment, which 'is contained in those preceding words, *Except a man be 'born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*; as is 'plain from verse the seventh, where this first maxim is again repeated in such a manner, as necessarily to imply, 'that, notwithstanding the variety of expression, the sense 'or meaning of the third and of the fifth is to be looked 'upon as precisely equivalent. *And that*, therefore there 'is nothing in the expression of *being born again*, that can 'possibly of itself imply any reference to baptism, and 'that we cannot be under any necessity of supposing such 'a reference in that other expression of *being born of water*, unless it can be shewn, that no other interpretation 'of this latter phrase can with propriety be assigned.' And again, p. 8, 9.

'That the *being born of water* does indeed solely, and 'intirely refer to this moral purity, without including, as 'any part of its meaning, this or that external emblem 'of it, seems to have been absolutely determined by our 'Saviour himself in the words immediately following the 'the text, and expressly designed to guard against any 'wrong interpretation of it. *That*, he observes, ver. 6, 7. 'which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of
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the spirit it is spirit. Marvel not, that I said unto you, ye must be born again. Nicodemus had before objected, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born? And it is in the words just now cited that our Lord obviates the difficulty. What then is the meaning of them? or what can it be but this, that the birth he referred to was purely spiritual, and was not to be considered, as the objection absurdly supposed, as having any connection with what was born of the flesh. But if there be any thing in christianity, that can justly come under the denomination of fleshly or corporeal, it must certainly be the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper, and these only, they being immediately relative to the body, tho' in their ultimate use and intention fitted for the benefit and advantage of the mind. To interpret the words of the text therefore of these two ordinances is to run directly, and as far as we can, into that very error against which our Saviour himself has expressly cautioned us in his own explication of them.

Except what is said of the term wash, or washed, which I shall take notice of hereafter, I have transcribed the first, and the whole of our author's second particular for the improvement and support of his first head: and by this specimen of his reasoning, the reader may judge of the rest. He endeavours to depreciate the ordinance of baptism, to insinuate into the mind of his readers a mean and contemptible opinion of it as a thing far below the spirit of christianity. And instead of representing it as an ordinance from heaven, and obedience thereto, as the fulfilling of righteousness after the great and high example of our blessed Lord; he seems rather to consider it as a thing fleshly and corporeal; a thing merely external and corporeal, a circumstance merely external and ritual, &c. and therefore of course, too mean to be strictly insisted upon either by the church of Christ in its collective body, or much regarded by individuals as professing christians. But is this way of representing our Lord's institution ever likely to increase the number of disciples to profess and practise his most excellent religion? Far from it: for infidelity is much more likely to be the consequence of such a way of preaching and writing, by which this ordinance of Christ is represented as unworthy of our strict regard: Some saving clauses are indeed sometimes thrown in: Even here Mr. B. barely allows, that baptism and the Lord's supper are in their ul-

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imate use and intention fitted for the benefit and advantage of the mind. And if baptism as well as the Lord's supper, is in its *ultimate use and intention fitted for the benefit and advantage of the mind*, then surely, it was not unworthy of our Lord to inculcate a strict and punctual regard to it in all the members of his church; as in this scripture he has very plainly done in a just correspondence with his own most excellent and perfect example of *fulfilling all righteousness*, Matt. iii. 13—17.

From the passages above recited, some persons may perhaps be led to doubt, whether our author understands what belongs to sound argument and good reasoning; but those who are acquainted with him, or with the other sermons which he has published, must know he is not defective in those most necessary accomplishments for the ministry, and may therefore think, that his rejecting, or overlooking the clearest and most rational construction of these words, and substituting instead thereof what has only show and appearance, but is utterly inconsistent with good sense and sound reasoning, must rather arise, from his great zeal for mixt communion, and his strong desire to propagate that opinion: for to pretend that an expression made use of by our Lord, and spoken to Nicodemus on purpose to explain the terms of a proposition, must itself be given up, and interpreted by the very words of the same proposition; which proposition, wanted that very explanation to make it clearly understood, is a way of arguing very new and singular; and for this extraordinary reason too, viz. because the terms of the proposition are in part repeated again immediately after, in the 7th verse, not at all considering, that the words as they there stand, afford the strongest argument against his whole pretence, and that the clear and plain truth is this. Our Saviour had solemnly affirmed to Nicodemus, that *except a man be born again, he could not see the kingdom of God*. But which words, being not clear and intelligible to his understanding, our Lord then explains them, and in the 5th verse; as solemnly assures him, that the true sense and meaning of the phrase he had before used, was this; that *except a man be born of water, and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*. So that having thus informed him better, and instructed him how to distinguish between a natural or fleshly birth, and that which is only a religious or spiritual birth; he then, according to the justest and most instructive rules of reasoning, to reprove his ignorance, and remove his surprise; adds

adds as follows, *Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again.* As much as if he had said, I have now assured you how those words first spoken by me, must in a religious sense be always understood : and that the persons concerning whom they are spoken, must *be born of water*, and not only so, but also, *born of the spirit*. For these words are not a mere tautology, or using two terms to express one and the same thing as Mr. B. pretends, p. 8. but are used by our Lord, to set forth the two distinct parts of that spiritual or religious birth, by which a man must enter into his church or kingdom, if ever he becomes rightly a member thereof. Not to set forth that which is *merely external and corporeal*, as our author terms it ; but as accompanying that also which is internal or spiritual, and both together, clearly expressive of the subjects, moral purity of mind and temper, discovered by a change of life and manners, and in his religious obedience to the divine command, as has been shewn above, tho' all notice thereof hath been carefully avoided by Mr. B. His pretences therefore are mere evasion, without the least proof or good authority to support them : And if as the most learned assert, *That to be born of water, is a phrase never used to signify any thing else but baptism* ; tis not our author's having recourse to three or four scriptures, where the word wash, or washed is metaphorically used, that can destroy the plain sense of our Lord's words ; because, they do in no respect come up to his phrase : a phrase, so limited and confined to the ordinance of baptism, that *it is never once used of any thing else.*

Nor was the phrase *cannot see, or cannot enter into the kingdom of God*, ever once supposed to mean the Lord's supper, as Mr. B. argues : tho' only for the sake of suggesting to his readers, that being *born of water*, has no more reference to baptism ; than *entering into the kingdom of God* has to the Lord's supper, p. 9, 10, 11. and therefore under this third particular he rejects his own supposition, as a sense given to that phrase, in this particular passage, which occurs not elsewhere in the new testament. This like all the rest is only beating the air : for if, as he says, *by the kingdom of God, no particular doctrine or institution of Christ is meant*, that is, the Lord's supper is not meant, it does not at all follow that the former phrase is not to be understood of baptism, and the latter of the visible church of Christ : But the first has been clearly proved, and that the last words ought to be understood of the church of Christ,

Christ, has been urged from many scriptures, none of which appear to have been at all considered by him: And yet he vainly labours to destroy the force of the argument from this text under consideration, by referring to a passage of St. Paul, p. 10. which he pretends, *seems absolutely to have decided against that interpretation of these words: tho' most unfortunately for his scheme, he has fixed upon one that does most properly signify the church of Christ.* Rom. xiv. 17. For here the context shews, that, many of those who had been incorporated into the kingdom of God, or church of Christ at Rome; instead of imploying their talents to cultivate in the minds of their brethren, the true principles of *righteousness, peace, and joy in the holy Ghost; or universal harmony of affection with each other in the profession of divine truth, which was undoubtedly the duty of every member of that kingdom; yet was so far from being attended to by them, that they became contentious, were ready to censure and judge their brethren, to grieve, and wound the consciences of the weak and timorous; and to insult over them, in putting stumbling blocks, or an occasion to fall in their brothers way, concerning meats, and drinks, and the observation of particular days: things, no way becoming the church of Christ to be solicitous about; for as members of this kingdom, their church state did not consist in meat and drink, but, as the apostle says, in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.* And therefore he adds, *He that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of men: is therefore, a worthy and reputable member of his kingdom. Let us therefore, follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another; for the same reasons which the apostle has here so forcibly set before us.* This being, plainly, the just sense of the text, and the visible church of Christ, necessarily understood by *the kingdom of God* therein mentioned: So, if this scripture be *absolutely decisive* as our author pretends; it must be so, in direct contradiction to his whole reasoning. Now has the apostle, the least view to the Lord's supper throughout the whole chapter, notwithstanding Mr. B.'s strange application of it; for the sake of promoting a practice, that would render baptism useless, and in the end, bring the whole of Christ's authority as a legislator of the christian church, into contempt. See p. 4, 5.

And a little after, in p. 11. he says; 'It may be justly
' questioned, whether this phrase, the kingdom of God,

is

‘ is ever used in the new testament to denote the visible church of Christ, or which amounts to the same thing, the external profession of christianity. Our Saviour seems rather to declare against such use of it, when he says, that *the kingdom of God cometh not with observation, neither shall they say, lo ! here, or lo ! there, but that it is within us.*’ Had our author been a quaker, I should not have wondered at his endeavouring to put that sense upon the words, Luke xvii. 20, 21. but he seems to be as much mistaken about the true sense of our Lord’s words in this scripture, as in those before considered ; and may perhaps find this, just as *absolutely decisive*, that is, as directly contrary to his imagination as the words of St. Paul just examined. For surely, he never once considered the persons to whom these words were addressed ; that they were Pharisees, Christ’s bitterest enemies, the most perverse, *wicked, and adulterous generation* ; the worst of *hypocrites* ; whom our Lord rebuked with sharpness, and against whom he denounced the severest woes. They asked him, *when the kingdom of God, or the church of the Messiah should be erected, or set up ; they looked for signs from heaven to manifest the approach of it, Matt. xii. 38—45. ch. xvi. 1—4. ch. xxiii. 13. to the end.* But our Lord assured them, that such things were not to be the forerunners of his kingdom ; people should not have occasion to say, *lo ! here, or lo ! there*, from any such appearances ; *for behold the kingdom of God is within you* ; it is already come : the church of the Messiah is already erected, here within your land and nation ; it is now gathered from the people amongst whom ye dwell. This is plainly the sense of our Lord’s words, *the kingdom of God is within you* ; because, it is most evident, that they were spoken to the Pharisees, and to them only ; and Christ could not possibly mean, that the true christian spirit, or that disposition of soul which a real christian possesses, was then within the hearts, or consciences of that *generation of vipers*, a sect quite destitute of every thing that was a christian, spiritual, divine and heavenly : yea the bitterest and most malicious persecutors, not only of our Lord, but also of his disciples and followers : could Christ then once think to say, that *the kingdom of God was within them* ? But these instances, prove, how very wide men wander from truth, when, to serve an hypothesis of their own, they regard the sound, more than the sense of scripture.

But,

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But, our author farther pretends, p. 11. 'It is apparent, that there are other external marks, by which men may with equal clearness and certainty profess themselves christians, and consequently become members of the visible church, without baptism.' And again, p. 12, 13. 'It must surely be obvious to every one, that whatever action or series of actions amounts to a declaration of a man's belief of the gospel, that action or series of actions must by the necessary purport and meaning of it constitute him a member of the visible church;' which like the other, is by him supposed to be without baptism: and therefore, he adds, 'Since that very phrase itself, if rationally interpreted, can mean nothing more than an external profession of the gospel.' But what does all this amount to, is it saying any thing to serve his purpose? He seems to allow, that baptism does *mean an external profession of the gospel*: and indeed, it is so, by the appointment of the gospel. Nay, is it not *apparent and obvious*, that the scripture is so far from giving the least countenance to such things as he here pleads for, that on the contrary, it represents baptism as the only way by which we *enter into Christ's church, or kingdom*, by which we are *added to the church*; by which we are *added to the Lord*; by which we *put on Christ*, and are *planted together* in a church state. John iii. 3. 5. Acts ii. 41. ch. v. 14. Rom. vi. 3—5. But for Mr. B. to pretend, that a man may be a *thorough believer of christianity*, and yet not obedient to its laws; it is no better, if not the very same thing that Christ himself complained of, and rejected, when some called him, *Lord, Lord*, but did not do his commandments. Luke vi. 46. 49. on which see my answer to the defence of Dr. Foster's sermon, p. 29. However, as our author very wisely takes no notice of any thing that confutes what he says; so to make a shew of saying something, he takes a great deal of care sometimes to repeat his suppositions, over and over again, in the same leaf, with little or no variation, as above: but all those suppositions, and a great many more in the same pages, are nothing but mere begging the question; unworthy of any notice, and without a parallel case in scripture. He refers indeed to *the nineteenth chapter of the Acts*; not considering, that the disciples which St. Paul met with at Ephesus, were the disciples of John, and had received his baptism: but as soon as they were informed that Christ was the Messiah John spoke of, and that the baptism of water was also an ordinance of Christ's; they were obedient to

it. This instance therefore instead of countenancing the neglect of baptism, should excite in all believers, a strict regard, a steady and chearful obedience to that sacred duty; and shews us that none should rest satisfied in any thing short of Christ's command; even tho' they had submitted to a baptism derived from heaven: and much more not to rest contented in a mere human ceremony. Moreover, from this scripture we are led to think, that believing in Christ, and being baptized into Christ, always went together; and that wherever the first is mentioned, the other is always to be understood. But if men can *give as sufficient evidence of their being christians* without baptism, as Mr. B. asserts, why did Christ institute it? And, why are the scriptures totally silent of such *sufficient evidence*? Protestants say, that, *scripture is the only rule both of faith, and practice in religion*: and till his *sufficient evidence* is produced from thence, and a good reason rendered why baptism was commanded by Christ, and yet may be omitted by us, we cannot allow such persons as our author speaks of, to be true members of the visible church of Christ. But enough has been said to this third particular, I therefore proceed to the suppositions contained in his fourth, which begins thus.

‘ It is apparent in the fourth place, that the discourse
 ‘ of which the words we are now considering make a part,
 ‘ was address’d by our Saviour to Nicodemus at their first
 ‘ interview. Now to suppose, that in this his first discourse
 ‘ with him, he should begin with instructing him in the na-
 ‘ ture and design of the external ceremonies of religion,
 ‘ would be to represent him as acting a part, in this single
 ‘ instance, contrary to what appears to have been his me-
 ‘ thod upon all other occasions. When he entered upon
 ‘ his public ministry, the great maxim he inculcated was,
 ‘ *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* And in his
 ‘ conversation with the woman of Samaria, the only point
 ‘ insisted upon, is the great, fundamental principle of
 ‘ christianity and of all religion, the spiritual worship of God,
 ‘ and the being devoted to him by the integrity and good-
 ‘ ness of our hearts, in express contradiction to what is
 ‘ merely external and ritual.’ To this I answer, Nicodemus was no stranger to the doctrine and miracles of Christ; but confessed both to be *from God*: it was therefore quite proper to *instruct him*, in what was necessary for him to do in order for his taking upon him the christian profession; and our Lord *instructed him* accordingly; he having already attained

tained to a suitable degree of faith, which is the second principle of the doctrine of Christ, or the last pre-requisite in order for baptism. Heb. vi. 1, 2. But as to the other instances which our author mentions, concerning Christ's entering upon his public ministry, and preaching to the Samaritans, he seems not to have considered, that as repentance according to the order of the gospel, is previously necessary in order for baptism, so, as it was therefore, first preached to the *Jews*, who were believers in the true God; but to the Samaritans, who were ignorant of him, it was most proper to begin with teaching them how to understand his being and perfections, with the nature of true spiritual and acceptable worship, in order for their obedience to his positive laws which was to follow such attainments; and therefore, if Christ had proceeded otherwise then he did in either of the cases, I apprehend it would not have been so suitable to his wisdom, nor to the nature and reason of things.

And as to the lawyer's question, Luke x. 26. Our Saviour's answer was the most pertinent; because, he seems neither to have asked for information, nor with a design to obey: He seemed (like some in our day) to have despised positive laws, and only to have *tempted* our Lord. Christ therefore referred him to *the law*, which teacheth *the love* of God and of our *neighbour*, or first principles: Sufficient, if duly regarded, to produce in him obedience to all divine precepts; to keep him from oppressing any body; and also excite him to do good unto such as were in distress. But as particular questions, require particular answers, according to the disposition of the person that propounds them; so, when *the young ruler*, put the same question to our Saviour that the lawyer had done, Luke xviii. 18. his answer varies a little, and Christ himself recites some of the commandments. But if any person should infer from thence, that we owe no love or obedience to God our heavenly father, because Christ did not particularly mention those duties to the young ruler, it would be counted very wild and absurd reasoning; and yet it is just the same with our author's. Moreover, if the young ruler had not put a second question to our Lord, Mr. B. might as justly have inferred, that benevolence to mankind could be no duty; because Christ had only bid him, not to do them an injury, as to pretend that baptism is of no force, because not expressly mentioned in those texts. But our Saviour's referring *the young ruler* to the commandments, must certainly suggest and inculcate to him, a due and suitable regard to all the positive

as well as to negative precepts contained in them ; and the bidding him at last to *take up his cross and follow him* who is the high example for every believer, must imply his being obedient to Christ in every thing, and consequently in baptism : Our author reasoning therefore in these, as well as in the instances before considered, is not only weak and inconclusive, but his assertions also founded upon the same, are even false in fact : for that baptism was *part of Christ's first instruction to Nicodemus*, and a clear reference made to that *positive duty* has been proved ; so that Mr. B. appears to be every way mistaken : And the inference he would draw in the conclusion of this particular, from *the Lord's supper* not being *instituted, till the time of Christ's death*, only shews him in this particular point of view, to have as little considered the true nature and design of that ordinance, as he had before the true meaning of his text. But see Luke xxii. 19, 20. 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25, 26. See also my remarks, &c. p. 105.

I now descend to our author's fifth and last particular under his first head ; where he says, p. 16, 17. ' Our Saviour had not as yet instituted *baptism* nor had himself ever baptized either in his own person, or by his apostles acting under his authority, *before his conversation with Nicodemus.*' These are mere assertions which have nothing to support them but the evangelist's silence, in not expressly mentioning Christ baptizing the disciples he had before made in Gallilee, at Capernaum, or elsewhere, as recorded in the foregoing chapter ; and also in the fourth chapter of St. Matthew's gospel, where Mr. B. might have seen, that *Jesus upon the commencement of his ministry, a little after he was baptized by John, went into Gallilee* ; and that he had gathered disciples there, before the time he *went up to Jerusalem* with his disciples, and Nicodemus's coming to him. St. Peter also assures us. Acts x. 36—39. that *the word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ, that word which was published throughout all Judea, began from Gallilee, after the baptism which John preached.* And if the whole gospel dispensation, which was published throughout all Judea, began from Gallilee ; then baptism was instituted before our Saviour's conversation with Nicodemus. And this St. Peter must know, as he was one of Christ's first disciples. Nay, this I think is confirmed from the whole series and account of those transactions. For John says, ch. iii. 22. *After these things came Jesus and his disciples in the land of Judea,*

and there he tarried with them and baptized. In which relation we have not a single word that indicates its being the beginning of Christ's baptizing, or that it was the first time Jesus ever baptized any ; but only that he *tarried with his disciples and baptized in Judea*, as he had done before in *Gallilee* and other places : this I think is the most natural construction of the words : and therefore afterwards it is said ; *When the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, he left Judea, and departed again into Gallilee*, ch. iv. 1—3. Here the making disciples, and baptizing them, are so expressed and connected together, as plainly to shew, that all who were made disciples by Christ were also baptized by him, or his disciples. So that there is no reason to think that our Lord ever made disciples in Gallilee without baptizing them, any more than he did in Judea : and the words of the text are very far from limiting of the account with the *Pharisees heard, that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John*, as transacted only in Judea ; and consequently baptism was taught and practised by Christ, before he talked with Nicodemus.

But I farther observe in answer to some other of our author's suppositions ; that Nicodemus was a Pharisee, and that some of the Pharisees had before that time been *sent as messengers from Jerusalem unto John*, to know if he was the Christ : where it also appears, that they inclined to believe he was ; because he baptized, which fairly implies, that they had some kind of expectations that the Messiah would introduce, or set up some such new institution, or they would not so readily have said, *Why baptizest thou then if thou be not the Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet.* Nicodemus therefore could not surely be quite ignorant of baptism, nor that it might be a part of the Messiah's dispensations, but only he did not understand it in the words of Christ, *ye must be born again.* So that the whole of our author's pretences under this fifth particular, like all the other, discovers nothing so much as his prejudice and inattention : And his introducing these words, *the Lord's supper*, at every turn where that ordinance has nothing to do, only tends to perplex the subject. The quotation before given from Dr. Gale, plainly shews how greatly Mr. B. was mistaken in what he says at the conclusion of this particular, as recited, p. 17. And thus I shall dismiss all his suggestions under his first head, with only just observing, that the pages I have already examined, clearly shew what regard is due to our author as an expositor of scripture in this controversy ; from the false glosses put upon his text, and all the other

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scriptures

scriptures mentioned by him. But as I hope the just and true import of them is herein sufficiently cleared and established, and the foundation of that curious superstructure which his fine imagination had raised, thereby entirely ruined, so there is no occasion for me to expose in like manner, the many fancies and suppositions in his other pages, as I might do, if I was willing to swell these papers to a volume: I shall therefore just note an instance or two, which shew his reasoning under the second head to be as extraordinary, as the instance already considered.

In page 18. He says, 'But in order to do all possible justice to the argument we are upon, let it be for the present admitted, that this passage, *namely, John iii. 5.* has in general a reference to baptism.' Nay, p. 19. 'He still farther allows, that the words contained a fixed, invariable rule, that none should be admitted to the Lord's supper, who had not been previously baptized. *And after this he acknowledges,* that the immersion of the adult upon a serious profession of their faith in Christ, is the only baptism instituted by the Gospel. And *that we have, he thinks,* reason abundantly sufficient for saying so.' And again, p. 20. we have not any doubt, but that the baptism which we have received, upon profession of our faith in Christ, is the baptism which he appointed.' What our author here, *in justice to the argument admits and allows,* is a direct contradiction to his former pretences; and yet he immediately contradicts the same in his reasoning upon it; which indeed, is such, as I could hardly have thought any wise man would have penned; but I find when some persons are very fond of an hypothesis, they are so willing to make a shew of saying something for it, that they often mention objections, and make such concessions as they are never able to answer. If this should by some be ascribed to the weakness of Mr. B's cause, yet surely none can attribute that weakness to him in the want of capacity for discerning better; because, in justice to the argument, he seems to allow the truth which the above passages express: tho' his strong desire for mixed communion makes him dispute the full force of them; and therefore he asks, p. 19. *Who is to judge, whether the person offering himself to our communion be baptized, or not.* But what he means by saying of John iii. 5. that *this passage has in general a reference to baptism* is not very easy to determine. For if the immersion of the adult, upon a serious profession of their faith in Christ, is the only baptism instituted by the gospel

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as he affirms; I am sure his text cannot possibly have a reference to any human ceremony which passed during the infancy of the persons he pleads for. And if he allows, that the words, John iii. 5. contain a fixed, invariable rule, that none should be admitted to the Lord's supper, who had not been previously baptized, he must also allow that none but those who have, had the only baptism instituted by the gospel; can be admitted to the Lord's supper by that fixed invariable rule.

Again, if as he asserts, that the immersion of the adult upon a serious profession of their faith in Christ, is the only baptism instituted by the gospel: And that we have reason abundantly sufficient for saying so. And therefore, as for ourselves we have not any doubt, but that the baptism, which we have received upon profession of our faith in Christ, is the baptism which he appointed; then it is not possible for us to think, that any persons have received christian baptism, who never were immersed, upon a serious profession of their faith in Christ, which is the only baptism instituted by the gospel: and therefore we cannot admit them to our communion in the Lord's supper, without acting contrary to the dictates of our consciences, the undoubted judgment of our own minds; and in direct violation of our Lord's fixed invariable rule, that none should be admitted to the Lord's supper who had not been previously baptized. Nor can the force of this reasoning, and his concessions upon which it is founded, be in the least affected by the following words, p. 19. 'Who is to judge, whether the person offering himself to our communion be baptized or not? Have we any authority to impose this judgment upon others, or oblige them to make it the rule of determination in their own case?' This is so far from disproving what he had before acknowledged, that his mentioning it was to no purpose: Because we thereby impose nothing upon others, nor any way oblige them to make it the rule of determination in their own case, we only act, and speak like upright and conscientious christians, who have not any doubt in that case, but have reason abundantly sufficient for saying what we do, and for keeping to the fixed invariable rule of the gospel; whilst we leave every body to think, and speak, and act according to their own judgment and conscience: And so far as we know, they do so; when they receive the Lord's supper together. But as to those Mr. B. speaks of, p. 19. 'Who really and conscientiously apprehend, that by any thing that has passed, during their infancy, the christian

‘ tian appointment of baptism has been truly and fully complied with, so far as relates to their own personal concern with that institution,’ we are so far from imposing our sentiments upon them, that we should refuse the ordinance of baptism to any men who would make us that declaration : because, we should thereby be fully assured, that he could not comply with it in the *answer of a good conscience towards God, and whatsoever is not of faith is sin.* However as we would impose nothing upon any man, so we think that no man has any authority to impose his judgment upon us, or to oblige us to make it the rule of determination in our own case, about receiving him to our communion. And surely our author could never imagine, that a whole church, the members of which *have not any doubt, but reason abundantly sufficient for saying, that the immersion of the adult upon a serious profession of their faith in Christ, is the only baptism instituted by the gospel;* yet must all implicitly submit their consciences, to the erring judgment of one single person, as they must necessarily do (even under the terrifying convictions above mentioned) when they receive any into their communion, who they know never had received *the only baptism instituted by the gospel :* and besides, this would also be a direct violation of the *fixed invariable rule of Christ, that none should be admitted to the Lord’s supper that had not been previously baptized.* He might therefore as well argue that one is more than an hundred ; or that the minority is much greater, and ought to be submitted to by the majority : but how strange would it appear should any man argue after the same manner upon any other subject but that of religion.

Moreover, as there is not a man of common understanding but must know, so Mr. B. ought to have considered, that no ceremony, which is not in itself *the only baptism* Christ instituted by the gospel, can ever become so, in the judgment of that church, the members of which are so far from having any doubt, that they *have reason abundantly sufficient for saying, that the immersion of the adult, upon a serious profession of their faith in Christ, is the only baptism instituted by the gospel :* let the persons who err from that baptism ever so conscientiously apprehend, that by any thing that has passed during their infancy, the christian appointment of baptism has been truly and fully complied with, so far as relates to their own personal concern with that institution ; for our consciences must no more be imposed upon by their bare pretence, nor our judgment determined by
their

their sincere mistake, than their erring conscience and judgment must by what *we have not any doubt in*, but *reason abundantly sufficient for saying to the contrary* : Nor is there a man in the world that has the least right to claim it of us ; neither will any wise and good man ever expect it. And if such an one should desire to receive the communion with us, he could not, as our author pretends, p. 21. *Think it extremely hard to be excluded from it, merely because he was not in our judgment regularly and truly baptized*, that is, refused by us, on account of his not having been obedient to Christ, in *the only baptism instituted by the gospel* : on the contrary, he must rather applaud our integrity, and that just regard which he must see we pay to Christ's authority, in that *fixed invariable rule, that none should be admitted to the Lord's supper who had not been previously baptized*. And of this we have an instance in the late reverend, pious and learned Mr. Whiston, who in his address to the Baptists, p. 24. and his Memoirs, p. 491. says, ' Nor, did I refuse to stay, August 2d. at Morcat during the celebration of the Lord's supper, without a form, which was very gravely, and very much to the edification of the congregation performed by the elder that officiated, and duly distributed by the deacons ; with a collection for the poor, tho' I was not permitted to partake of it myself, at which I took no offence ; because I know the Baptists are not at present satisfied in giving it to any but those baptized by immersion.' However, if our author, and the Pedobaptists with whom he is acquainted, are of so different a temper, as to take offence when they ought to commend, it can be no recommendation to the communion of any society. And if he has no more regard for the purity of the christian institution, and for what he knew, is *the only baptism instituted by the gospel* ; if he can so readily violate *the fixed invariable rule of Christ, that none should be admitted to the Lord's supper who had not been previously baptized* ; and can take his communion with such as he knows never had the baptism, he is, I believe, in as much danger, as any person that bears the name of baptist, of being, as he expresses it, *reconciled to the . . . communion in the Lord's supper with those of the roman catholic persuasion*, p. 20, 21.

Indeed, according to our author's reasoning, I do not see how he can justify his own separation from any church : Or that it is possible to reconcile his present dissenting from the established church with his own arguments ; which are
such,

such, that there is not a protestant dissenter in the kingdom can justly thank him for his labours; because, the whole body of them of all denominations, are most evidently condemned by what he says. It is I believe generally acknowledged by the ministers of the church of England, that, if any people have reason to dissent from their communion, it is the baptists. But as Mr. B. thinks it unlawful for us to exclude any from our communion who profess themselves christians, or who desire to partake with us of the Lord's supper; it must surely be unlawful for him to refuse communion with the church of England in the Lord's supper: which he says, p. 25. by 'its outward form in-particular plainly appears to have been especially designed to remind christians of that charity and love, which they owe to one another, notwithstanding any differences in opinion that may subsist among them.' And then he adds, p. 26. 'What now can more directly tend to frustrate and defeat this particular design of the ordinance, than the excluding any of our christian brethren from the use and benefit of it.' And tho' what he says in many things, was fully answered before he writ them; yet, still farther to shew the weakness and inconsistency of this discourse, I will here transcribe a page or two of it; only inserting the word separation, instead of *exclusion* or *limitation*, whereby my readers, and Mr. B. himself, may clearly see, that, if his arguments have any kind of force in them against us, they must equally condemn himself, with the whole body of dissenters of every denomination, in separating themselves from the established church. For p. 27. he says,

'What is the natural tendency of such a *separation*, but to alienate our affections from the rest of the christian world? For let me appeal to every man's own judgment and sense of things, and ask; whether we are not more likely to look upon those, whom we think ourselves not at liberty to *continue in their* christian communion, with indifference of mind and coolness of affection, than upon those, whom we consider, as the persons, with whom we ought to communicate in the celebration of this ordinance? If we say, that we may have a truly catholic and candid spirit, notwithstanding this *separation* of our communion; the same exactly may others say, who should *separate themselves* from our communion, and as we should think very unjustly. But it is a matter of no consequence, that by such a *separation* of our communion, we not only act in direct contradiction to this can-

' did and catholic temper and in immediate opposition to
 ' its dictates, how careful soever we may be to cherish it,
 ' upon all other occasions; but likewise that we addict our-
 ' selves to a practice, that has a natural and apparent ten-
 ' dency to weaken the very spirit itself, and principle of
 ' christian charity in our hearts? Are not the expediency
 ' and usefulness, on the one hand, and the inconveniency and
 ' detriment, on the other, of religious observances entire-
 ' ly and absolutely to be determined by the tendency,
 ' which they have, to promote the christian spirit or the
 ' contrary? And this is exactly what my present argument
 ' is founded upon. Far be it from me to say, that these
 ' *separating* measures do always in fact damp or impair the
 ' generous affections of those who adhere to them, farther
 ' than what is necessarily implied in the very *separation* it-
 ' self, as a practice manifestly repugnant to those affecti-
 ' ons? But if this be its direct and immediate tendency,
 ' and if we cannot but presume, that it must in many in-
 ' stances have had very unhappy effects of this kind, we
 ' must surely consider it as a practice highly inconsistent
 ' with the generous spirit of the gospel, and with the de-
 ' sign of the Lord's supper in particular. And therefore
 ' we cannot suppose our Saviour to have appointed any
 ' such *separation*, without supposing him at the same time,
 ' to act in opposition to the design of his own religion,
 ' and to the scope and meaning of his own institution.
 ' This together with the other arguments, that have been
 ' already insisted upon, must, I think, appear abundantly
 ' sufficient to shew, that our Saviour cannot reasonably be
 ' thought, either in the text or in any other part of his in-
 ' structions given to mankind, to have made the difference
 ' of opinion and that different practice, which is
 ' the consequence of it, a ground of separate communion,
 ' and that therefore we are under no obligations by virtue
 ' of his authority to *set up a separate communion.*'

What therefore our author can urge to vindicate his sepa-
 rating from the communion of the church of England, that
 will not equally justify our *limited communion*, I am not able
 to conceive: because, immediately after the above passage, he
 expressly says, p. 29. ' That neither our Saviour nor his apos-
 ' tles ever made such exclusive terms of communion with
 ' respect to other points, which we must needs allow to be
 ' of far greater importance than baptism, of in-
 ' finitely greater moment, than any notions we can enter-
 ' tain about baptism, be they ever so just and defensible,

' or

‘ or any manner of administering it, be it ever so exactly agreeable to the original and primitive standard.’ And p. 30. he adds, ‘ by not doing this, has he not in the clearest manner pointed out to all his disciples and followers, what ought to be their conduct with respect to such different sentiments, as they may happen to entertain about the particular doctrines, or external appointments of the gospel? Has he not thus plainly intimated, that these differences ought not to be the least bar or impediment to our friendly and unlimited communion, or participation in all the exercises of religion and ordinances of the gospel.

Now, if Mr. B. really believes, that Christ *has in the clearest manner pointed out to all his disciples and followers, what ought to be their conduct with respect to such different sentiments, about the particular doctrines or external appointments of the gospel, as may happen to arise, or can possibly subsist in their minds or practice in relation to them*: yet there ought to be no separation, but an *unlimited participation in all the exercises of religion and ordinances of the gospel* ought to subsist and remain; then it is not easy to conceive, for what reason, and upon what grounds it is, that our author not only separates himself, but upholds a schism, and as far as in him lies, endeavours to increase the number of separatists from the established church. For if it be unjustifiable or unlawful for the baptists not to admit any persons who profess themselves christians, to church membership, and to partake with us of the Lord’s supper; it must certainly be equally unlawful for us, to exclude ourselves from the established church which is willing to receive us into her communion. But according to Mr. B. the sin and guilt of all our churches, and of every other congregation of the protestant dissenters throughout the whole kingdom, must be much greater, in forming societies, and setting up separate communions in opposition to her, because, he says, that, *different sentiments about the particular doctrines, or external appointments of the gospel, cannot be the least bar or impediment to our friendly and unlimited communion, or participation in all the exercises of religion and ordinances of the gospel.* And if it is lawful, and they may once communicate together, notwithstanding all such different sentiments as they may happen to entertain about those doctrines and appointments, then surely, it must in his judgment, be so at all times, and in all places: because, he says, Christ *has in the clearest manner*

pointed out to all his disciples and followers, what ought to be their conduct, with respect to such different sentiments : and therefore, upon his principles, they can have no authority from Christ to disturb the peace, to create divisions, to establish, or to uphold schisms in his mystical body the church : which according to him is a practice highly inconsistent with the general spirit of the gospel, and with the design of the Lord's supper in particular. And therefore, we cannot suppose our Saviour to have appointed any such separation, without supposing him at the same time, to act in opposition to the design of his own religion, and to the scope and meaning of his own institution. What therefore must we think of Mr. B's separation from the establishment : it cannot possibly arise from principle, which is not only very clear from the passages above recited ; but from many others, which represent to us his settled judgment, that no errors of any kind will justify such exclusion or separation, but that we must consider it as a practice highly inconsistent with the general spirit of the gospel, and with the design of the Lord's supper in particular. And if any persons should ascribe his separation, either to a spirit of faction, or to private views ; it would be attributing it to the very worst motives that a man can act from, which I am very far from doing, and am therefore wholly at a loss what to think on this point : Tho' did I know the true reasons and motives of his dissenting, I should the better know how to give a proper answer to them ; but as he hath so strongly asserted, that different sentiments about the particular doctrines or external appointments of the gospel, ought not to be the least bar or impediment to our unlimited communion, or participation in all the exercises of religion and ordinances of the gospel : there cannot surely be any thing believed or practised in the church of England, which can justify his separation : and not only his separation, but also his upholding and maintaining a separate communion in opposition to her. This surely is utterly inconsistent with his whole argument, and with what he terms, a truly catholic and candid spirit, what directly tends, not only to frustrate and defeat the peculiar design of the ordinance, but to alienate the affections of his followers from the rest of the christian world ; to make them look with indifference of mind and coolness of affection upon their brethren. By his separation therefore, he must not only act in direct contradiction to this candid and catholic temper, and in immediate opposition to its dictates but likewise to addict himself to a practice, that

that has a natural and apparent tendency to weaken the very spirit itself, and principle of christian charity in his heart, and also in the hearts of all those that follow him : So that if he would convince the world he is sincere, and really believes what he has preached and printed for others : surely he should shut up the doors of his meeting-house, and join the communion of our established church, or the church of Rome ; to avoid the charge of schism, and the wickedness of upholding such unjustifiable divisions in the christian world, to the unspeakable injury of the christian cause, if not peril of the souls of men. But if he should refuse to do this, and attempt to defend his separation, I apprehend the same arguments which are sufficient to do that, will as well justify the baptists in refusing to admit any *into church fellowship*, or to a *participation with them of the Lord's supper*, who are not baptized : and then he must give up his whole argument, and retract what he has published against our *limited communion*, that he may thereby be consistent with himself.

Another specimen of our author's profound reasoning against our strict adhesion to Christ's authority in the ordinance of baptism, we have p. 29. before cited in these words : ' That neither our Saviour nor his apostles ever made such exclusive terms of communion with respect to other points.' Had they done so in many points, I think there is no great doubt but Mr. B's ready invention could have found something to have said against them : and he must know, that some persons would on that very account have said much more against the whole christian institution than they can possibly find room for now. And therefore, as the late Dr. Foster says in his sermon on this same subject. ' It is much more honourable to our holy religion, that there be a general easy rule, for the communion of all christians ; than to explain it in such a manner, as leaves it on uncertain and indeterminable principles, and, consequently to humour and prejudice.' But does it at all follow, that, because neither Christ nor his apostles ever made other points the condition of entering into his church, that therefore he has not done it in this, and that his plain express words, John iii. 5. must not be so understood. He might as well assert, that because God never made any other point but circumcision, the condition of every male's eating of the Lord's passover amongst the Jews ; that therefore he never did it in that point. But that every serious Gentile who was not circumcised, had as much right to,
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and might as reasonably and as lawfully eat of it as the Jews themselves : it being a memorial of that special goodness and mighty power which God exerted in favour of those who were believers in, and worshippers of him, as the only true God : and so to use his own phrase, might *be productive of the most beneficial and salutary effects upon his temper and life*, p. 22. This passage has something in it very extraordinary, and therefore I shall take the liberty to transcribe the whole ; applying it to believing Gentiles and the Lord's passover ; instead of christian believers and the Lord's supper : for in my opinion it looks full as well in that light, and must have been of equal weight and force, against the necessity of a Jewish profelyte's receiving the ordinance of circumcision in order to his eating the passover under the Jewish, as it is against a believer's obedience to the ordinance of baptism, in order to his partaking of the Lord's supper under the christian dispensation. Mr. B. after mentioning the design of the Lord's supper, and our Saviour's express words, *This do in remembrance of me*, says, ' And is not every serious, well-disposed *Gentile* ' (his word is christian) capable of complying with this ' commandment ; even tho' he may not, thro' the mistake of his judgment, have been *circumcised* (his word is baptized) in his adult years ? May he not nevertheless ' remember the great Redeemer of mankind with cordial ' affection ? May he not celebrate his condescending love ' with fervent praise and gratitude ? May not his doing ' this, by an attendance upon an ordinance of our blessed ' *God's* own appointment, be productive of the most beneficial and salutary effects upon his temper and life, effects ' of the very same kind with those, which can alone be ' rationally expected by any one to arise from a serious and ' regular attendance upon this ordinance ? To suppose ' therefore, that our *God* should institute this ordinance ' naturally capable of being useful to all *serious Gentiles*, ' and yet should by another appointment exclude from attending upon it those, who are in no respect disqualified ' for receiving all the same benefits from it, that any ' others can reasonably or justly look for, would be to suppose, what is absolutely inconsistent with his character, ' as a wise and prudent, but much more as an infallible ' Legislator.'

Hence we clearly see the inconclusiveness of our author's pleas : that they are not only trifling, but even false in fact : For what do all his maybe's signify ? Are they a proof
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of any thing but the weakness of his cause, and his readiness to sacrifice an institution of the gospel for the sake of promoting a darling scheme, a novel and merely human scheme opposed to the divine authority? He ought surely to have considered, that it is not our own fancies, not what we fondly wish for, and desire to have practised in christian communities as wisest and best in our esteem; but only what God himself has appointed, and made the rule of his people's obedience and conduct, with regard to himself and others, that will justify his church in receiving members to partake of the peculiar privileges thereof. And therefore, when men will argue against revelation only upon mere suppositions and maybe's of their own, the apostle's words, Rom. ix. 20. are a fit answer. *Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed, say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?* We know infinite wisdom cannot err, and should keep close to its directions in every thing; for as Mr. Chillingworth says, *No demonstration can be stronger than this, God hath said so, therefore it is true.* But from Mr. B's, and certain other performances, we see, what unbounded lengths some men will run, when they have a favourite point in view; neither considering the evil, nor discerning the consequences of what they say; tho' it be to the dishonour of the infinitely wise Jehovah, and the reproach of supernatural revelation; by which the religious duties both of Jews and christians ought to be directed and regulated. And therefore we need not at all wonder that infidelity so greatly prevails in our day, when such kind of sentiments are published by christian ministers, both from the pulpit and the press. Our author has not only discovered his inconsideration, and the weakness of his cause, in making use of such weak and trifling pleas; but he has in a very strange and unaccountable manner, taken upon him, in this and some other places to arraign and judge his Maker and Saviour; by a most flagrant impeachment of his *wisdom and prudence*, and charging our *infallible Legislator* with appointing *what is absolutely inconsistent with his character*; on this supposition, that the scriptures are from him, and the duty in dispute contained therein: And this (as the same arguing affects both) for no other reason, but because he was pleased to establish, not only under the Jewish, but also under the christian dispensation; a proper and most reasonable test of his subjects sincere obedience, in order for their enjoyment of the full privileges of his peculiar church.

church and people. A thing every way worthy, and highly becoming the dignity and majesty of an infinitely wise and omnipotent God; who ought to be obeyed in every thing, in every signification of his will, by such frail dependent creatures as we are. May all those who have unadvisedly impeached his infinite, unchangeable, and glorious perfections, be brought to see the fatal tendency thereof, and in consequence of that make public retraction of those pernicious sentiments which they have advanced.

From what has been said, the inconclusiveness and weakness of our author's way of arguing, is, I presume, sufficiently evident. And as his reasoning is thus extraordinary, so his application of scripture is every way equal to it. This is manifest from the very few texts which he pretends to touch upon, as I have herein already made appear: and the same is as evident from that which remains to be remarked. In p. 19. he asks, 'Does not St. Peter say, that *baptism is not the putting away the filth of the flesh, or the washing of water merely, but the answer of a good conscience towards God?*' Tho' if our author does not, yet surely every other man must know, that the human ceremony which passed during the infancy of the persons he there speaks of, could not possibly be *the answer of a good conscience towards God* in them; as they were utterly unable to distinguish between good and evil, to know any thing concerning truth or falsehood, or have any conscience towards God about duty, moral or divine.

I had remarked many other things under this second head, which for brevity sake are here omitted, because I think them fully answered in my examination of the late Dr. Foster's sermon on the same subject; and my defence of that examination. And tho' our author's third head, was *to consider such objections, as have been or may be urged against what he should advance*; and this made the subject of his second sermon, yet he has never duly considered those material, and most important objections that have been urged against the unlimited communion he pleads for: Many of which the reader may see in the first four pages of this answer. And as I have so largely confuted what he has advanced under his first and second heads, I have no occasion to spend time about the third, till he has laid a better foundation for his scheme: But let him first consider, that it is not mere suppositions, maybe's, or possibilities, destitute of divine authority, which will be esteemed proofs on this important subject. And here I shall conclude,

clude, with this remark, that the greatest part of Mr. B's second discourse, does not affect, nor indeed, has much relation to the main argument. And I may also add, that his first discourse did not require an answer, on account of the matter therein contained, so much as from the character and popularity of its author.

The E N D.

E R R A T A.

PAGE 1. line 13. for that, read yet. p. 2. l. 43. for my, r. any. p. 3. l. 24. r. the truth. l. 41. dele is, at done. p. 5. l. 21. for capacity, r. skill. p. 7. l. 15. for 16, r. 15. l. 19. for 9. 10. r. 12. l. 39. r. Coloss. 1. 13. ch. iv. ii. p. 8. l. 18. for well. r. will. p. 9. l. 43. dele, be. p. 10. l. 33. r. into the. p. 13. l. 17. dele s, in neighbours. p. 14. l. 9. r. into the. l. 13. r. the original. l. 14. dele original. p. 15. l. 36. r. is expressly. p. 17. l. 24. for vi. r. iv. p. 19. l. 1. dele it. p. 22. l. 24. for this r. his. l. 37. for Now. r. Nor. l. 42. dele a. p. 23. l. 37. dele a. p. 26. l. 8. dele as. l. 24. for, or r. as l. 41. for an r. any. p. 27. l. 1. r. to the. l. 5. r. authors. l. last, r. into the. p. 28. l. 4. for every. r. ever. l. 33. r. penfation. l. 42. for p. 17. r. p. 17. p. 29. l. 10. r. instances. p. 31. l. 5. for men, r. man. l. 17, r. yet they must. l. 21. r. whom they p. 32. l. 18. r. and of this. l. 30. r. recommendation of them to. l. 33. for knew. r. know. l. 37. for the r. that, l. 38. r. of a bap. p. 33. l. 43. for it is, r. is it. p. 35. l. 33. dele the. p. 40. l. 2. r. make an open public, l. last dele & in proofs.

TO THE
READER.



*W*HEN writers of controversy, are continually urging the same, or like pleas, to what have been often answered, without taking the least notice of those answers; the best reply to such pieces, is to let the world see, that the matter therein contained, was fully confuted before it was written: And this cannot be so well done as by reprinting, where occasion requires, those passages which are a full answer to what such writers advance. This, I hope will justify the quotations here made use of, and convince the unprejudiced what regard is due to such works, as contain notions and fancies directly contrary to the universal sense of the whole christian church; which naturally tend to undermine the authority of revelation, and, in the end, to root out all regard for the christian cause.